

Americans purchased is now 4.3 cents more expensive because of Bill Clinton and the liberal Democrats.

Yesterday was tax freedom day. And in honor of tax freedom day, Congress should repeal this regressive gas tax and let the American people keep more of what they earn.

Mr. Speaker, we know the President feels our pain, but the real question is, "does he feel the gas tax pains?"

EDUCATION CUTS

(Ms. McKINNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and include extraneous material.)

Ms. McKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, I am no longer astonished by the lengths to which Republican leaders will go just to cut education funding. Monday's Washington Post reported that the Republican House majority leader favored cutting education in order to pay for a repeal of the gas tax. Now, that's audacious stuff coming from someone who used Government loans to get through school.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican leadership could have easily paid for a repeal of the gas tax by not giving the military \$7 billion more than what it asked for in 1996.

In fact, what guarantee do we even have that the oil companies will reduce their prices once the gas tax is repealed?

Once again, Mr. Speaker, the Republican leadership has demonstrated that it is only interested in greasing the rigs of the oil companies, while giving the American middle class a Texas-sized wedge.

I include for the RECORD the following article from the Washington Post of Monday, May 6, 1996:

ARMEY: CHEAPER FUEL VIA EDUCATION CUTS
(By Serge F. Kovaleski)

House Majority Leader Richard K. Arney (R-Tex.) yesterday suggested that the revenue loss from a repeal of the 1993 gasoline tax could be offset by cutting spending on education.

"Maybe we ought to take another look at the amount of money we are spending on education," Arney said on NBC's "Meet the Press." "There is a place where we're getting a declining value for an increasing dollar. It's in education."

"If in fact we can get some discipline in the use of our education dollar, I think we can make up the difference," Arney added.

The White House said yesterday that targeting education funds is not acceptable.

Reducing the federal 18.3-cents-a-gallon gasoline tax by 4.3 cents, as proposed by Republicans, would save the average motorist about \$27 a year in taxes, but would reduce federal revenue by \$30 billion to \$35 billion over the next seven years, the White House estimates.

Senate Majority Leader and presumptive GOP presidential nominee Robert J. Dole (Kan.), who has made repeal of the 1993 gas tax a focus of his campaign against President Clinton, plans to introduce legislation Tuesday to repeal the 1993 tax temporarily. The increase was part of the deficit reduction package that Clinton pushed through Congress in 1993 without a single Republican vote.

Under the Dole proposal, the tax would be rolled back through January 1997 and a permanent repeal would be considered as part of the budget for the fiscal year starting Oct. 1. Clinton has said he would be willing to consider scrapping the tax if Republicans found a fair way to make up the revenue loss.

But in a statement yesterday, White House Chief of Staff Leon E. Panetta called on Dole and House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) "immediately and unequivocally" to repudiate Arney's suggestion that education spending could be cut to finance a reduction in the gasoline tax.

White House economic adviser Laura D'Andrea Tyson, also interviewed on "meet the Press," refused to say whether the President would sign a freestanding bill to kill the tax hike, but argued that any cut should be part of a balanced budget plan. "It's going to be very hard for them to find \$30 billion to \$35 billion," she said.

Tyson stressed the White House would prefer tax reductions for education or a family tax credit or an IRA expansion rather than a gasoline tax cut.

Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Tex.), on ABC's "This Week With David Brinkley," said the best way to offset the tax repeal would be to cut welfare benefits for legal immigrants, which would result in savings of about \$14 billion a year. He also said Congress should not twin the gasoline tax repeal and a minimum wage increase, which Dole has suggested to appeal to Clinton and the Democrats.

Gingrich echoed that view in remarks on CBS's "Face the Nation." He said the gas tax legislation would be a "simple, narrow bill" that would not be lined to the minimum wage issue. He said the House Ways and Means Committee would meet Tuesday to consider how to pay for the tax repeal. He did not embrace Arney's suggestion or reject it.

He said that Dole's "proposal to repeal the gas tax increase has been generally pretty popular. I think it will pass by a big margin," giving Clinton "a chance to sign it into law before Memorial Day so that Americans who drive over Memorial Day will pay slightly less for gasoline."

The Clinton administration, however, said that wholesale prices are already going down after the President's decision last week to sell 12 million barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Economists have noted that when the price of gasoline is adjusted for inflation, it is cheap by historical standards. In 1995 dollars, average gasoline prices are at 1991 levels but are well below where they were for most of the 1980s. The average national price for a gallon of unleaded regular gasoline at the pump is \$1.273. That is also far cheaper than gasoline prices in most of the world. In some European countries gasoline is three times the U.S. price.

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT POLLING

(Mr. TIAHRT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, last night on NBC's television program called "The Fleecing of America," it was revealed that Clinton's Department of Agriculture has hired a political pollster for \$33,000, our tax dollars, by the way, to go out and poll some political people, white Americans only. This particular pollster is known for polling for Democrat women. And so she went

out and polled, in Kansas by the way, white Americans not Hispanics, not blacks but white Americans, in Kansas, the swing voters, to find out how they were feeling about the Food Stamp Program.

It just so happens that the House chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, the gentleman from Kansas, [Mr. ROBERTS], is running for the Senate against a female opponent in Kansas. But our tax dollars were being spent to find out what the Kansas public was thinking. How long is the American public going to put up with this? How long is the American public going to allow their tax dollars to be used for political purposes by this administration? I ask Secretary Glickman to ask Under Secretary Haas to resign.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NEWBORNS' AND MOTHERS' HEALTH PROTECTION ACT

(Mr. KLECZKA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, today, in honor of Mother's Day, I am introducing a bill to improve health protections for new mothers and their babies.

We have all heard the stories from mothers we represent about the difficulties and tragedies that can result from a too-early hospital discharge after childbirth. Providers concur that the first few days after delivery are critical to both the mother's and the infant's health.

The Newborns' and Mothers' Health Protection Act removes insurance mandates that restrict the length of postpartum care mothers and infants receive. The bill requires that health plans provide up to 48 hours of coverage for normal delivery, and 96 hours for caesarean section—the accepted recommendations of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The proposal is designed to ensure that post-delivery care is based on the unique characteristics of each mother and her newborn child. Like the Bradley-Kassebaum bill that overwhelmingly passed the Senate Labor Committee, this legislation would return the length of stay decision to mothers and their health care providers. The bill does not impose a mandate, but rather, removes one, giving doctors more flexibility in meeting the needs of their patients.

All 15 Democratic Members of the Ways and Means Committee have joined me in introducing this important legislation. It is my hope that my Republican colleagues will join us in a bipartisan effort to pass these vital protections for newborns and their mothers.